

8 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversations with Charles Bartlett

1. Charles Bartlett, who is an old friend and college classmate of mine, called me yesterday morning to say that he had done some digging on the Vietnamese story and that he was now convinced that the Agency was not at fault in this situation but had been unfairly damaged by deliberate leaks, which he claimed came from the State Department. I said I could not comment on the matter and he said he could. He said he did not want to revive the whole controversy in all its heat but he did want to find some oblique way of handling it. I said that we were under instructions to keep our mouths shut and hoped that if we needed defense, we would get it at the proper time from the top.

2. Bartlett called me again last night to say that he had further developed the story and that he found it to be a fascinating one. However, he implied that he had been asked not to add fuel to the controversy and went on to state that the discipline that CIA officials had shown in not publicly counterattacking was appreciated in the White House. He added that the people in the White House were looking for ways of setting the record straight and he speculated that at the President's news conference on Wednesday there might be such an occasion.

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Chief

Covert Action Staff

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Bartlett's column of 7 October, called to attention by MPC (Buckslip), 10 Oct 63